



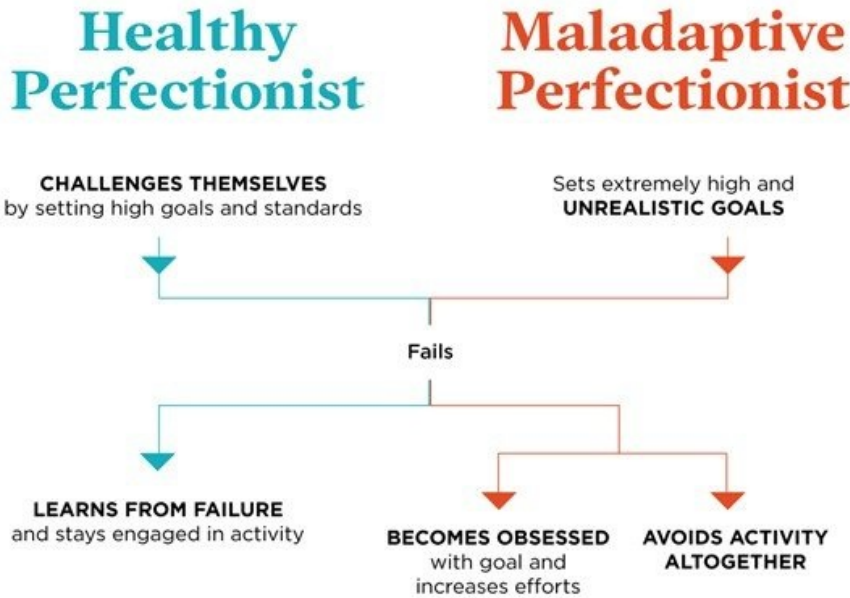
Perfectionism vs Striving for Excellence

PERFECTIONISM VS STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

"Perfectionism, is a personality trait characterized by a person's concern with striving for flawlessness and perfection and is accompanied by critical self-evaluations and concerns regarding others' evaluations"

Atychiophobia: "is an intense fear of failure. It may cause you to put off or avoid activity or scenario that has the potential for an unsuccessful outcome. Someone with this condition may be scared to try new things, take risks or embrace growth for fear of failure."

If one end of the spectrum is perfectionism, and the other is fear of failure, then which one is better for practical life? The answer lays someplace in the middle. Below we have a chart



Source: Jessica Rohlfing Pryor, core faculty member at the Counseling Program from The Family Institute at Northwestern University.

Created by: Counseling@Northwestern, the Online Master of Arts in Counseling Program from The Family Institute at Northwestern University.

In life, we strive to develop critical skills that map across family, friends, and careers. They include, but are not limited to, communication, problem-solving, time management, decision-making, creativity, emotional intelligence, adaptability, leadership, confidence, and resilience. (CITE LI POST)

I was listening to my 17-year-old daughter discuss getting a perfect 36 on your ACT with her friends yet only .25% of students taking this test get that score and roughly 2% of high school students graduate high school with a 4.0 or better GPA. Yet the evidence is clear that most valedictorians do not become the next Steve Jobs, Warren Buffet, or Jeff Bezos, but normally conform to the corporate world and have nice successful careers. What are these students, our future employees, missing going into the workforce? What are we teaching our kids if perfection is not achievable or even the goal but striving for excellence is so much healthier because we can achieve this? How do we teach our workforce to strive for excellence and not perfection?

What responsibility do parents have for their children, and what responsibility does the education system have for students, to prepare them for life? What is more important: your GPA and ACT/SAT scores, or developing your core life skills? When children are growing up, they may view school as the end-all-be-all, success/failure metric, but that is hardly the case. As an adult, when is the last time that someone asked you what your GPA in high school or college was, or what your SAT/ACT score was?

Flip the script, what skillsets do you use in your relationships, your family, with your coworkers, with your clients, etc? I would venture to guess those core life skills matter a whole lot more in the end than ACT/SAT scores. Our society has a bit of a perfectionist tendency at times, and as parents and educators we have a role in that. Why in a business newsletter do we mention this? Well because addressing this now can change the trajectory of your children, impact society, and shape them into the future business leaders they may become.

In business, are we perfectionists, atychiophobia focused, or a mixture? Be ok with temporary setbacks on the way to success. In the words of Michael Jordan, "I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I have lost almost 300 games. Twenty-six times I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I have failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I was successful." - Michael Jordan.

Therefore, if grades aren't enough, then how do we foster creativity, collaboration, teamwork, and enthusiasm in an honest, hardworking employee? You have a role in this in your business, in your family, and in educating and mentoring the next generation.

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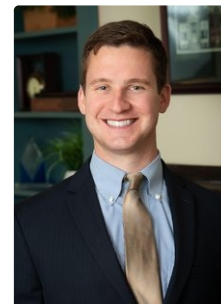
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